DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 305 869 HE 022 407

AUTHOR Higbee, Jeanne L.; And Others
TITLE Serving Learning Disabled Students Within and Outside the Classroom.
PUB DATE Mar 89
NOTE 15p.; Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the American College Personnel Association (Washington, DC, March 1989).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Failure; *College Students; Developmental Disabilities; Dyslexia; Educational Diagnosis; Helping Relationship; Higher Education; Language Handicaps; *Learning Disabilities; *Learning Problems; Mathematics Skills; Perceptual Handicaps; Reading Difficulties; Social Support Groups; *Student Adjustment; Student Personnel Services; Teacher Role; Writing Difficulties

ABSTRACT

Information on types of learning disabilities (i.e. dyslexia and dyscalculia) is presented to help professionals in the field of higher education learn about how to identify learning disabled (LD) students, appropriate accommodations and modifications, special services, resources for referral, policy implications, and legal issues. Due to improved special education programs in kindergarten through 12th grade, LD students are enrolling in college in increasing numbers. Some have never been previously identified because they have been able to adapt until challenged by the rigors of college level work. Swift identification may be crucial for the student who has the ability to succeed with the assistance of support services. Information on relevant federal legislation and legal definitions of LD is provided. Potential LD symptoms are discussed in regard to written language, oral language, reading, mathematics, thinking and reasoning, behaviors, and personal growth. A list of 21 classroom modifications includes establishing study and support groups, providing lecture notes in advance, and giving extended deadlines for assignments. Six policy implications consider admissions, evaluation, registration, degree requirements, classroom modifications/accommodations, and provision of support services on campus. Contains 18 references. (SM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED305869

Serving Learning Disabled Students within and outside the Classroom

Jeanne L. Higbee
Assistant Professor of Counseling
University of Georgia
Division of Developmental Studies
106 Clark Howell Hall, Athens, GA 30602
(404) 542-0471

Patricia L. Dwinell
Assistant to the Director for Research & Evaluation
University of Georgia
Division of Developmental Studies
106 Clark Howell Hall, Athens, GA 30602
(404) 542-0480

Karen S. Kalivoda
Coordinator of Handicapped Student Services
University of Georgia
Academic Building, Athens, GA 30602
(404) 542-8719 or 8727

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Jeanne L. Higbee

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the American College Personnel Association, March, 1989, Washington, D. C.

HE 022 407

Running Head: Serving Learning Disabled Students

ABSTRACT

Learning disabled (L.D.) students are enrolling in college in increasing numbers. The purpose of this presentation is to inform higher education professionals regarding types of learning disabilities--e.g., dyslexia, dyscalculia--their symptoms, how to identify L.D. students, appropriate accommodations and modifications, special services, resources for referral, policy implications, and legal issues.

Learning disability (L.D.) is a term which describes a broad range of neurological dysfunction. Due to improved special education programs in K-12 education, learning disabled students are enrolling in college in increasing numbers. There are also students entering institutions of higher education who never have been previously identified as learning disabled because they have been able to adapt until challenged by the rigors of college level work. The purpose of this presentation is to inform higher education professionals regarding types of learning disabilities--e.g., dyslexia, dyscalculia--their symptoms, appropriate accommodations and modifications, special services, resources for referral, policy implications, and legal issues.

Learning disabilities are invisible and often misunderstood. Swift identification may be crucial for the student who has the ability to succeed with the assistance of support services. Some L.D. students will prefer to attempt to hide their disabilities until the extent of their academic difficulty prevents them from keeping their secret any longer.

Federal Law

Learning disabilities, as defined below, is considered a handicap under the terms of Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, PL 93-112, which protects handicapped individuals against discrimination in the areas of employment, housing, architectural accessibility, and

education, as follows:

> No otherwise qualified handicapped individual shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity which receives or benefits from Federal financial assistance.

The definition of "Children with specific learning disabilities," which is applied to Section 504, is provided in the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, PL 94-142.

PL 94-482, the Vocational Education Act of 1976, strengthens previous legislation by providing for vocational education in postsecondary educational institutions.

Definitions

Two definitions of Specific Learning Disability " are as follows:

(1) Federal Register, August 23, 1977:

> 'Specific learning disability' means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding and using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations. The term includes such conditions as perceptual handicaps, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental asphasia. The term does not include children who have learning problems which are primarily the result of visual, learning or motor handicaps, or mental retardation, or of environmental, cultural or economic disadvantage.

(2) Association of Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities (ACLD):

> "Specific Learning Disabilities is a chronic condition of neurological origin which selectively interferes with the development, integration, and/or demonstration of verbal and/or non-verbal abilities. Specific Learning Disabilities exist as a distinct handicapping condition in the presence of average to superior intelligence, adequate sensory and motor systems, and adequate learning opportunities. The condition varies in its manifestations and in degree of severity. Throughout life the condition can affect self-esteem, education, vocation, socialization, and/or daily living activities."

The following terms are sometimes used interchangeably with the term, "learning disability," but each is a separate and unique disorder:

Developmental Aphasia---a disorder of language functions

Dyscalculia---primary calculating disability

Dysgraphia---primary writing disability

Dyslexia---primary reading disability

Specific Language Disability---difficulty with symbol systems

Cognitive problems---difficulty organizing or sequencing thoughts or distinguishing between concepts

Directional problems---trouble with left and right, directions, maps

Perceptual problems---sensory intake and/or processing

Potential Symptoms of Learning Disabilities

The following behaviors may be indicative of a learning disability, especially if several of these traits are displayed by an individual.

Written Language

Handwriting---writes illegibly, very small characters, or often prints

Spelling---words written like they sound (logically, but incorrectly)
e.g. "verry," "skool"

Difficulty with visual memory

Organizational problems when writing a simple paragraph

Idiosyncrasies in capitalization and punctuation

Difficulty applying grammatical rules and concepts

Weak vocabulary skills

Oral Language

Listening problems---remaining attentive, selecting relevant information, recalling specific words

Auditory discrimination, memory, and sequencing problems

Difficulty organizing ideas and/or expressing ideas in words or coherent sentences

Forgetting, confusing, or misarticulating words

Problems with separating words into distinct sounds or syllables or blending sounds together to form a word

Trouble understanding figurative language; overdependence upon concrete language

Lack of gestures when speaking

Utilizing language inappropriate for specific social situations

Non-participation

Reading

Low or inconsistent reading rate; word-by-word reader; subvocalization

Errors in oral reading, mispronunciation, omissions, substitutions

Slow processing of verbal information

Perceptual confusion

Inadequate memory span: orientation of letters, order of letters

Problems with decoding and/or comprehension

Vowel confusion

Visual discrimination problems

Mathematics

Difficulty learning the series of steps to solve a problem

Trouble performing the actual calculations

Inability to apply mathematical concepts to word problems

Difficulty solving problems presented orally

Problems with part - whole relationships, decimals, and/or percentages

Difficulty with concepts of time and space, spatial visualization (geometry)

Thinking and Reasoning

Characterized by disorganization, inability to plan or set goals, poor problem solving skills, difficulty in making choices or selecting from alternatives, and/or understanding causal relationships

Problems in identifying main ideas; misled by irrelevant information

Poor abstract reasoning skills

Divergent problem solving

Difficulty generalizing experiences/ideas to new or different situations

Behaviors

Hyperactivity, short attention span, distractibility

Egocentric

Inflexible

Clumsy, difficulty with motor coordination

Directional confusion (left and right, finding a location, etc.)

Manipulative

Negative reaction to touching/being touched

Impulsive

Passive or active aggression

Inappropriate comments

Personal Growth

Immaturity

Feelings of inadequacy; poor self-concept

Difficulty defining and using personal space

Problems anticipating the reactions of others

Difficulty generalizing experiences

Independence/dependence confusion

Easily influenced by others

High level of anxiety

May be very creative

Classroom Modifications/Accommodations

1. Allow the student to tape record lectures or have another student serve as note-taker.
2. Give extra time to complete exams if necessary and/or allow the student to take exams in a separate room.
3. Allow the student to respond orally to essay and/or objective tests, either to a proctor or into a tape recorder.
4. Permit the student to use a four-function calculator in class and/or when taking exams.
5. Provide alternatives to computer-scored answer sheets.
6. Give extended deadlines for assignments.
7. Provide lecture notes in advance.
8. Clearly state reading and written assignments for entire quarter/semester on the course syllabus.
9. Create a different weighting system for spelling errors.
10. Allow use of a word processing package which corrects for spelling.
11. Permit the student to take exams on the computer.
12. Give partial credit for work shown even when answer is incorrect.
13. Check the availability of taped texts or create another system for communicating written information.
14. Establish study and support groups.
15. Provide information regarding the availability of tutoring.

16. Be accessible to respond to questions immediately before and after class.
17. Consider the preferred perceptual modalities of L. D. students when planning methods of instruction.
18. Permit the student to attend more than one section of the class.
19. Make provisions for extra credit assignments.
20. Review previous material and preview new material at beginning of class. Summarize at end of class.
21. Be aware of cues indicating high levels of frustration and/or anxiety. Make appropriate referrals for counseling.

Policy Implications

1. Admissions: Should learning disabled students receive any special consideration during the admissions process? (E. g., should SAT scores be weighted less heavily in calculating predicted college GPA?)
2. Evaluation: What is the institution's policy regarding the evaluation process which determines whether the student qualifies for accommodations or modifications in degree and course requirements or special services? What documentation is required? If private assessments or previous public school evaluations are utilized, how recent must they be? Or is the student required to be evaluated on campus or by a specific community agency?

3. Registration: Are L. D. students given the opportunity to register early in order to sign up for courses appropriate to their needs?
4. Degree requirements: Is there an opportunity for substitution of degree requirements (e.g., foreign language) for L. D. students?
5. Classroom modifications/accommodations: To what extent are faculty members expected/required to allow modifications or accommodations such as those listed previously as appropriate for individual L. D. students?
6. Provision of support services on campus: To what extent are services provided? Where are they housed? To whom do service providers report, e. g., V. P. for Student Affairs or V. P. for Academic Affairs? How are services funded, e. g., institutional budget or fee generation?

Bibliography

Adelman, P., & Olufs, D. (1986). Assisting college students with learning disabilities: A tutor's manual. Columbus, OH: Association on Handicapped Student Service Programs in Postsecondary Education.

Association on Handicapped Student Service Programs in Postsecondary Education (1987). Support services for L.D. students in post-secondary education: A compendium of readings. Columbus, OH: AHSSPPE.

Brown, D. (1980). Steps to independence for people with learning disabilities. Washington, D.C.: Closer Look.

Cruickshank, W. M., Morse, W. C., & Johns, J. S. (1980). Learning disabilities: The struggle from adolescence toward adulthood. Syracuse, N. Y.: Syracuse University Press.

Gajar, A. Programming for college students with learning disabilities. Columbus, OH: Association on Handicapped Student Service Programs in Postsecondary Education.

Garnett, K., & La Porta, S. (1984). Dispelling the myths: College students and learning disabilities. New York: Hunter College.

Hardin, C. J. (1988). Access to higher education: Who belongs? Journal of Developmental Education, 12, 1, 2-6, 19.

Harris, R. W. (1984). Reflections through the looking glass. Columbus, OH: Association on Handicapped Student Service Programs in Post-Secondary Education.

Lazarus, B. D. (1989). Serving learning disabled students in postsecondary settings. Journal of Developmental Education, 12, 3, 2-6.

Longo, J. A. (1988). The learning disabled: Challenge to postsecondary institutions. Journal of Developmental Education, 11, 10-14.

Lundquist, A. J. (1988). Remediating language deficient/dyslexic college students: An interview with Robert Nash. Journal of Developmental Education, 12, 1, 16-19.

Lynn, R. (1979). Learning disabilities - An overview of theories, approaches, and politics. New York: The Free Press.

MacCracken, M. (1986). Turnabout children, Boston: Little, Brown, & Co.

Reid, K., & Hresko, W. P. (1981). A cognitive approach to learning disabilities. New York: McGraw - Hill, Inc.

Schmidt, M. R., & Sprandel, H. Z., eds. (1982). New directions for student services: Helping the learning - disabled student, No. 18. San Francisco: Jossey - Bass.

Smith, C. R., (1983). Learning disabilities: The inter-action of learner, task, and setting, Boston: Little, Brown, & Co.

Sprandel, H. Z., & Schmidt, M. R. (1980). New directions for student services: Serving handicapped students, No. 10. San Francisco: Jossy - Bass.

Wallace, G., & McLoughlin, J. A. (1979). Learning disabilities: Concepts and characteristics. Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill.